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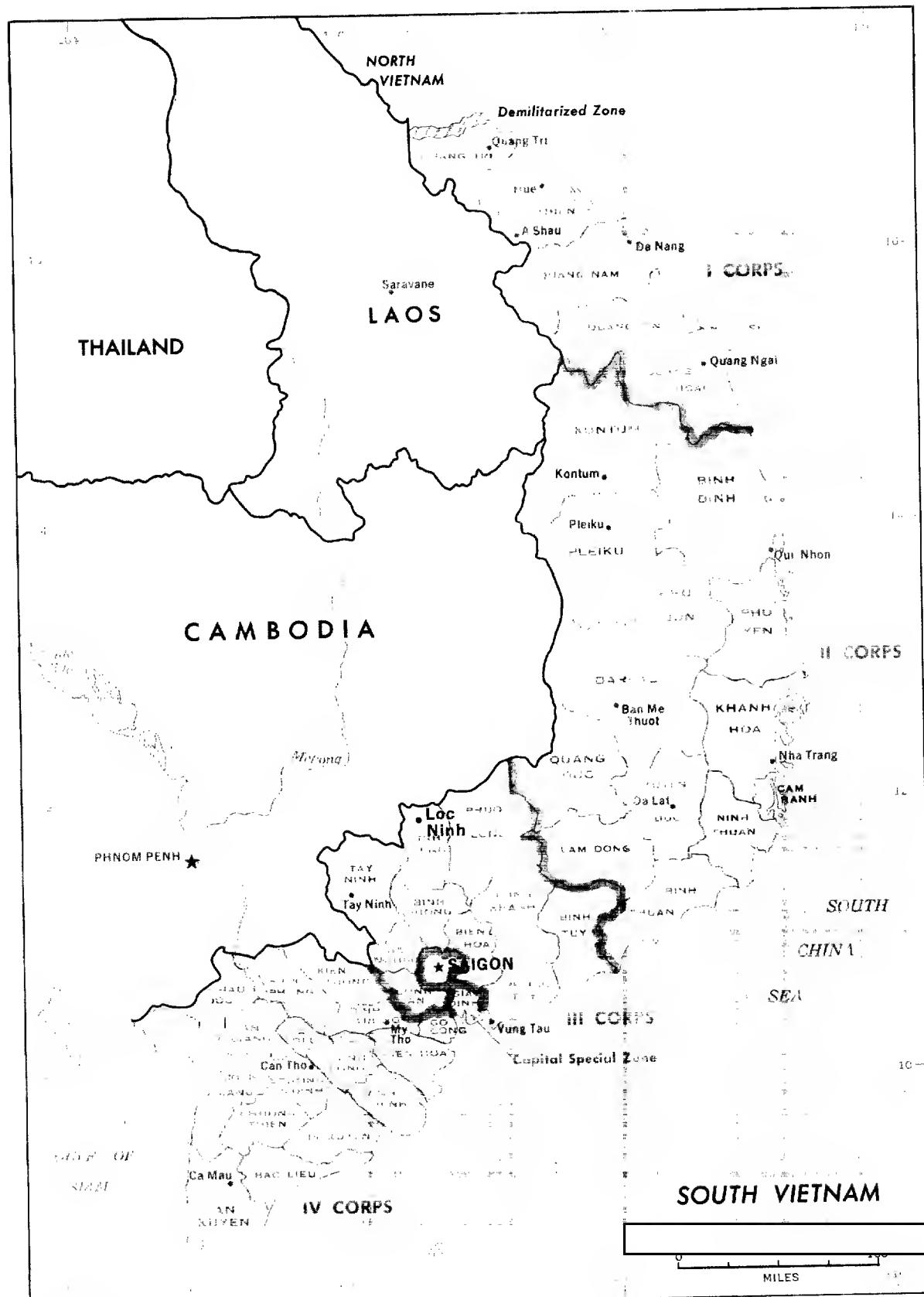
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Vietnam: Communist forces continue to offer resistance to allied operations in northern III Corps.

Company-strength US reinforcements sent into the area of Loc Ninh, where fighting has been heavy in the past few days, quickly met with stiff opposition.

Although the bulk of the four Communist divisions known to be operating in III Corps is still located in remote base areas along the Cambodian border, some of the Communist reactions to recent allied sweeps in northeastern Tay Ninh Province may be intended to divert attention from the southern deployments of main force units closer to Saigon.

Captured documents from the Dong Ngai regiment--a unit which operates just north of Saigon--suggests that this unit is preparing for attacks on the outlying districts of the capital city sometime this month.

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Communist China: New members were apparently added to the party central committee at its 12th plenum in October, but the wholesale reorganization made necessary by the Cultural Revolution will probably not take place until the Ninth Party Congress, now tentatively scheduled for next spring.

The New China News Agency has identified two members of the Chinese delegation that went to Albania in late November as members of the central committee. These men, Chief of Staff Huang Yung-sheng and Wu Te, a Peking city official, had been only alternate members before the 12th plenum. Their promotion suggests that other alternate members may also have been advanced to fill vacancies caused by death or purge.

According to the existing party constitution, adopted in 1956, vacancies on the central committee are to be filled by alternate members in order of established precedence. As of 1 October, Wu and Huang ranked nominally as 29th and 35th among the alternate members. It appears likely that legalities were not strictly observed and that these two men were promoted over other higher ranking alternates.

On 28 November, Peking announced the death of central committee member Hsu Te-li, nonagenarian and once Mao Tse-tung's teacher. Of the 99 central committee members elected in 1956, 86 are still alive, but only 33 still show up in public and of these only 20 are politically active.

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Indonesia: Indonesian security operations against Communist guerrilla forces along the western Sarawak border have been largely successful.

Over the past year an intensive Indonesian Army campaign has been conducted in northwestern Indonesian Borneo opposite the western portion of Sarawak. It has reduced the Communist force in that area, the predominantly Chinese Sarawak People's Guerrilla Army, from 500-800 to something "over 100." This success is attributable in part to the lack of local tribal support for the guerrillas and to the ruthless elimination of Chinese residents of the area. The campaign has also been aided by improved cooperation between the Indonesian and Malaysian security forces,

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[redacted] It seems likely that these guerrillas will break up as an effective unit within six months to a year.

A second Communist guerrilla force, known as the North Kalimantan People's Army (PARAKU), remains firmly entrenched farther east along Sarawak's border. Numbering about 200, they apparently have at least tacit support of much of the local tribal population. Because they are located in a rugged and thinly populated region, the PARAKU will be extremely difficult to dislodge, and may be able to operate indefinitely in the area as a minor nuisance to both Sarawak and Indonesian Borneo.

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Czechoslovakia: Party leaders, concerned about the mounting display of popular dissatisfaction, are competing for support among party members.

On 4 December party leader Dubcek addressed a group of economic managers about the next party central committee meeting, which is to be held later this month. The group apparently gave Dubcek a vote of confidence on the party's economic policy for the next two years. Dubcek's speech suggested that moderate leaders still hope they can salvage some of the economic proposals from the party's preinvasion program.

Members of the conservative, pro-Soviet faction of the party, meanwhile, have been seeking publicity and have been trying to broaden their base of support. Vasil Bilak and Alois Indra, for example, have received several Soviet delegations and have been busily addressing local party meetings.

Moscow is doing what it can slowly and quietly to bolster the position of lower level conservatives as well as top-level "realists." The Soviet press is mildly praising the political trend, although it still criticizes the Czechoslovak press.

Czechoslovak news media, nevertheless, have kept up agitation to do away with the Soviet-sponsored newspaper Zpravy, as well as the Soviet-run Radio Vltava. Premier Cernik reportedly stated last week that Prague has protested strongly to the "fraternal countries" about their press and radio activity in Czechoslovakia.

The news media are also intensely critical of restrictions on freedom of the press, travel, and association. The population has responded with a stream of letters and resolutions calling on the Dubcek leadership to keep its preinvasion promises.

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Israel - Arab States: The Israelis apparently have begun to use armed helicopters in retaliatory strikes.

A US attaché, following a visit to the scene of a recent Israeli attack in Jordan, believes that an armed helicopter may have been used in the operation.

The Israeli helicopter force has been increased from 46 units before the Arab-Israeli war in June 1967 to more than 75 now, and more are known to be on order. The Israelis used helicopters in air assault missions during the June war, but only for ferrying troops and supplies. None was equipped as a gun ship.

Last month, Israel placed an order with a US firm for 26 sets of an ammunition storage and feed system designed for airborne operations. These sets reportedly will be installed on twenty-two helicopters recently purchased from Italy.

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Turkey: The ruling Justice Party once more faces a power struggle between Prime Minister Demirel and the ultraconservative wing of the party.

Minister of Communications Bilgic and five other cabinet ministers reportedly submitted their resignations on 2 December after Demirel had turned down their bid for six places on the party's executive board. The board has only seven minister members. In their drive to wrest party control from Demirel, Bilgic and his followers are reportedly seeking support from former partisans of deposed and executed prime minister Adnan Menderes.

The Bilgic group hopes to rally support among provincial party leaders dissatisfied with Demirel's relatively moderate policies. If they are successful, the ultraconservatives will present a tough challenge to Demirel during the period before the October 1969 national elections. The spectre of the military's intervention in politics would again be raised should the ultraconservatives take over from Demirel and the Justice Party win in the elections.

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NOTE

Colombia: The political crisis over President Lleras' constitutional reform bill has been resolved. A compromise worked out to overcome Conservative objections will probably be passed quickly by congress. Lleras' maneuver in provoking the crisis was a dangerous, although probably calculated, move. His tactics, which were offensive to many in his own party as well as to the Conservatives, could eventually weaken Colombia's national front system of government. [redacted]

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